

SOCIAL ACTION

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Church Youth in Social Action

SOCIAL ACTION Magazine

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Cover picture: students of the University of Illinois picket a restaurant near the campus which refused to serve Negroes. Picture by courtesy of *Motive* magazine.

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Youth and Home Town Christianity

The World Conference of Christian Youth, to be held at Oslo, Norway in July, will center attention again upon youth in the Christian Church throughout the world. Mr. Andrews' article is especially important in this context, for he reminds us forcefully that too much of the "young people's work" done in our churches has denied the one-ness of the church by refusing its younger members the right to participate responsibly in all parts of the church's program. Even the most cursory glance at the history of the missionary movement and the rise of the Student Christian Movement throughout the world should convince us that when young people *are* encouraged to take the initiative their leadership in the Christian church is both daring and substantial. Too often the encouragement is not given in the local church where this kind of leadership is most needed.

This indicates the problem which Mr. Andrews does not greatly stress: the disparity between national aims and programs of church young people's departments and their realization in local churches. With all that he has to say, leaders of youth are in agreement. The various youth fellowships, in their national councils, commit their many members to far-reaching programs of Christian action in church and community. Can it be that the church in the community is afraid to trust its own younger members? Are ministers failing in their leadership of this group? Or are the plans and programs formulated at national meetings too impractical for local application? In a time when thousands of dollars are being spent to send young people to conferences in this country and abroad, the answer to these questions has a special importance. The thinking young person today, particularly the returned veteran, knows that effective action in one's own home town is the only possible basis for the creation of national and world-wide community. If we aren't doing so well there, Oslo won't help us.

—RALPH DOUGLAS HYSLOP

Ralph Douglas Hyslop, Ph.D., is Minister for Student Life of the Board of Home Missions of the Congregational Christian Churches.

Church Youth in Social Action

by BENJAMIN R. ANDREWS

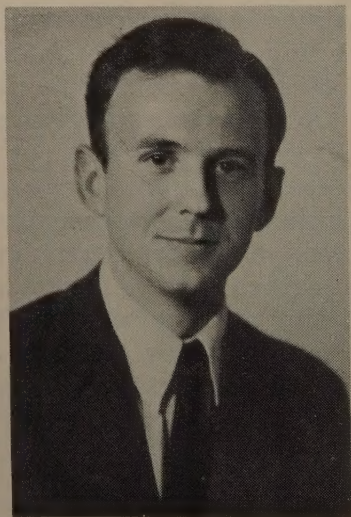
"Carry the Torch"—Where?

If one were to lay end to end all of the ministers and laymen who tell young people that it is up to them to do a better job than their elders in building a peaceful world and that the brave new world of tomorrow waits for them to help give it birth, it would be a good thing. The young people with whom I work are sick and tired of being told what a terrible mess the world is in and how they must do something about it. They ask, "What shall we do? How shall we go about it? What can we do *now* that will make any difference?" But the older generation seldom answers these questions. The lecture time is generally spent in challenging young people, telling them what an awful and yet what a great thing it is to be alive and ending up on the note of how the speaker envies them their great opportunities to achieve where his generation has failed.

The Author

BENJAMIN R. ANDREWS is the chaplain of the Northfield School for Girls in Northfield, Massachusetts. After his graduation from Cornell University in 1940 he served as assistant director of Cornell University's United Religions Work for a year before entering Yale Divinity School. While doing his B.D. work he was pastor of a church at Milford, Connecticut.

Mr. Andrews has been engaged recently in conducting a sample survey of social action programs carried on by church young people in the United States. Results from that survey are reported in this issue.



What is the Church doing to help its young people share in meeting world, national and local community problems as Christian citizens? How effectively are we relating our young people to the Church and then sending them out with the Christian understanding and faith and the technical knowledge which will enable them to deal with problems of racial discrimination, of economic injustice, of political chicanery? What can the Church do that it is not already doing to make its young people responsible members of the Church and Christian members of the communities to which they belong?

Young People in the Church

While there may seem to be many more important questions in an atomic age than that of young people and the Church, in a very real way the success or failure of the Church's work with young people is symptomatic of its general success or failure in its mission to mankind. Why is this so?

Importance of Young People's Work

In the first place, young people are a large segment of the total population. At best a Church's ministry is but partial if it does not include this group in its family in some significant way.

In the second place, it is generally understood that what happens to people as they pass through the adolescent period in large measure determines the future course of their lives as far as Christian living is concerned. The habit patterns, the loyalties which are served in a realistic and satisfying way, and the faith which is achieved in those years stay with an individual for the rest of his life. I have heard Dr. John R. Mott say that if he were to live his life over again he would be sorely tempted to work with the high school age group rather than the college group because in so many respects we get at people too late in their lives when we work with them in college.

The Leaven of Ideals

In the third place, young people for the most part have not yet become encrusted with the indifference and hypocrisy and so-called "common sense" which come with maturity in our society, and it is hard to see how the Church can meet the demands of our day without the leavening influence which young people can bring to the whole life of the Church. "It can't be done" is not part of the vocabulary of youth except as it is drilled into them by their elders. The limitations of race prejudice, narrow nationalism, and economic and social class loyalties hold our younger people back only as parents and teachers and leaders in the Church may raise these barriers around them. The Church, if it would find its true vocation and fulfill it in our day, desperately needs to find ways in which its younger members may take leadership and give it renewed inspiration and vision and strength.

Finally, it should be obvious that, if we are concerned as Christian leaders with having our Church members act as Christians in areas of social and political injustice, they must do it as members of the Christian community who are motivated and guided by their Christian faith. If the Christian Church is failing to bring young people into the Church, we need to see why we are failing and in what ways we can do better in the future.

Attitudes that Limit Programs

As one attends meetings of Church leaders where work with young people is being planned, certain attitudes appear very conspicuously. First of all, there is the attitude that the Church somehow belongs to its older members—that they have certain proprietary rights in its management and in determining its policies which they are fearful of losing and which, indeed, they will run no risks of giving up. The desire for power is no less a problem in the Church than in other social relationships. And when control is threatened—as it inevitably

is when young people ask questions, make suggestions, and fail to see why certain things have to be done merely because they always have been done that way—the older church members and leaders build up barriers shutting out the younger group from any significant opportunities for leadership. They are subtle barriers but not less effective than Jim Crow in keeping young people “in their place.” The young people may have a group of their own, meeting on Sunday nights. They may—and indeed should—attend Sunday School and Church. They may wait on tables at Church suppers and help clean up afterwards. They may participate in an occasional Sunday service. But on the whole, in most churches young people feel themselves to be on the outside looking in, as members of an organization of which they are not responsibly a part.

A correlative attitude one meets in adult groups as they think of the Church's work with young people is that young people are not interested in Christianity or the Church. This is, of course, true of a good many young people as it is of their elders, but in our younger people there is still the flexibility of mind and habit and attitude which will respond to the Christian faith if it is presented to them in an intelligent and enthusiastic way. A larger proportion of young people would be interested in the Church if they saw a greater demonstration of the sincerity and devotion of the older members already in it, and if they saw in them the newness and freshness of life they talk about. Thinking young people are looking for a faith with power to change life, to help them work toward and achieve some of the ideals presented to them. When they see that power at work, they will respond.

One of the most self-defeating attitudes of adults as they work with young people is that of thinking that they themselves must work up programs, allowing little or no participation on the part of the young people themselves in the plan-

ning. Perhaps the Church is improving in its use of the group work technique, but it still has a long way to go.

Those who talk most about the democratic method time and again foist a program on a group of young people instead of helping it plan its own program. The young people will make mistakes, of course, but also, and much more often, will make wise decisions—sometimes far wiser than those the adult advisor would have made. Young people become adults only as we treat them as adults and trust them as we would adults.

Young People are Persons

Fourthly, there is the attitude of regarding young people in the mass and not seeing them as individuals. The question is usually phrased, "What will we do with the *young people*?" People become Christians as individuals; they serve the Church as individuals through this particular talent or that. Our work with young people in the Church must become a much more person-centered work. There will of course be a certain overall program of interest to people in general and to specific age groups, but if our churches are too large to deal with people as individuals, perhaps they had better become smaller. In a time when so many factors make us see man in the mass, the Church needs to be a community where people are seen also as individuals. It is no great problem to bring them into

YOUTH PESSIMISM

Warning that many young students were imbued with a philosophy of utter negation, Dr. Sarah Gibson Blanding, president of Vassar College, called recently for educators and adults to hold fast their convictions that a solution of the world's ills can be found.

"There are evidences that much of the idealism engendered in the war is giving way to disillusionment and pessimism," she told a meeting of Associated Colleges.

"If our young people are to help lead us out of the abyss there is no room for the negative outlook and it is up to the older generation to equip young people for leadership." She called for giving young people a firm basis of ethical principles. Education, she asserted, had neglected the correlation and integration of ethical insight and social knowledge.

Adapted from news story,
New York Times,
January 26, 1947.

the Church and to give them significant ways in which they may share in the total church fellowship.

Young People are Capable

A fifth common attitude is that young people are not responsible. The fact of the matter is that no one is responsible until he has been given responsibility and been helped to carry it out. In my work with young people who have been leaders of the Northfield School Church, I have been associated with high school students who have been far more responsible than the adult leaders of many churches I have known. Responsibility or lack of it is not dependent on age but on experience. We can give younger people the experiences in our churches which will develop them as responsible leaders in many parts of the Church program.

Last year the question came up in our Church cabinet of spending money to send vitamins to a school in Japan. After several spoke in favor of the project, the chairman asked for adverse opinion. There being none, the vote was unanimous. Just recently the question came up of contributing money toward a fund for an oil painting for our Church lounge. The general sense of the meeting was that the money might better be spent for overseas relief. I wonder how some adult Church committees would have voted on these two projects.

There Is Just One Church

What then would represent a sound approach to work with young people in the Church? It would, first of all, recognize that there is just one Church. People of all ages as well as all races and nationalities should have the privilege of sharing in the planning of its program, in the determining of its policies, in carrying responsibilities for its work. It is *the Church*, not just the Sunday School or a young people's group, in which all share from the earliest ages. While there will be specialized groups for different ages, the main emphasis of the Church

will be on those things in which everyone may share—young and old alike.

Beginning with the high school group there should be some experimentation in setting up the Church School curriculum so that it cuts across age lines. Most of the adults in the Church are at about the same level as high school students in their knowledge of the Bible and in their understanding of theology and of the meaning of the Christian faith for social problems. By dividing the Church School curriculum according to the subject to be discussed rather than age, there would be a cross-section group and a stimulating interchange of ideas which might well bring a new spirit into the whole Church.

Let Us Worship Together

There is certainly no valid division which should be made for worship in the Church after the grammar school age. Though there are countless books of prayers and services for "students" or for "youth" which suggest the existence of some special forms of worship for youth, they often offer some ersatz service for real Christian worship. The worship of the Church should be sufficiently universal in its meaning so that all ages can learn to find help and inspiration. If the Sunday service of worship does not have meaning for young people, it indicates either that they have not been trained to participate in the service or that the service is such that older members do not receive anything from it either.

There should of course be an opportunity for young people to learn to lead in worship. This is one of the primary reasons for the service at the young people's meetings. There is value too in worship in smaller, more intimate groups. But such worship should not differ in any significant way from the worship of adults. Christian worship is an experience which knows no divisions according to age lines after children have become twelve or fourteen.

Our experience at Northfield with the high school group

reveals the failure of sermons supposedly "aimed at youth." Those sermons which are most effective and meaningful are the ones which would be effective with adult congregations as well, and the sermons prepared especially for "the young" usually are offensive to them. Thinking young people are looking for meat in sermons and unthinking ones need to have it. Any preaching which comes down to earth and wrestles with real problems in the light of the Christian faith will be as appropriate for the young as it is for the old.

Jobs for Younger Members

Many churches have included younger members of the congregation on their boards of deacons, boards of trustees, pru-



—Ford News Bureau

James Carty, a ministerial student, is shown working on the assembly line at the Rouge plant of the Ford Motor Company. Carty and several other ministerial students spent their summer learning at first-hand what problems beset the working man. They are determined to do preaching which "comes down to earth and wrestles with real problems in the light of the Christian faith."

dential and other committees and have found the experiment to be extremely successful. This again is a way of affirming the fact that the Church is a fellowship of the *whole* Christian community. Obviously, a Church which has shoved young people off into a corner by themselves will have difficulty in finding young people who are ready to assume such leadership, and it will be necessary to give them lesser responsibilities before advancing them to such posts. The Church at large is quite unaware of the potential leadership which it is letting slip through its fingers by failing to use its younger members in really significant posts of leadership in the total Church program.

In setting up the budget of the Church we need the idealism and realism of younger members of our congregations. If we had their counsel, many of the seemingly impossible projects would be seen in a new light. They should be included as regular canvassers in the every-member canvass drive for funds, not relegated to raising some youth budget of their own, later to be included in the total budget of the Church. They should receive the same training that other canvassers receive and visit people whom they know or should know in their general age or social group just as the other canvassers go to see the people with whom they would be most effective.

The devotion to missions is remarkable among the younger people in the Church when the "missionary appeal" is presented in its total religious, economic, political and social setting, and when they are made aware of the tremendous post-war needs the Church is seeking to meet through world missions. Just as many churches are realizing that missions is not a subject merely of concern to the women of the Church, so many are sensing the enthusiastic interest and support which younger people can bring to a total church missionary program. While it is fine for a young people's group to have one or two shares of their own in some missionary project, it is far better for them to join with the older members of the Church in a

Church-wide missionary program in which all have a share and in which they join not merely as "young people" but as individual members of the Church.

Place for a Young People's Group

There will of course always be a continuing place for some form of Young People's Group just as there is for the Men's Club or the Ladies' Guild in the Church. There are special needs and concerns which young people have. There are of course certain common bonds which make them a natural group with which to work. The Young People's Group is an agency in which leaders can be developed, where talents can be discovered, where young people can find themselves. It is a group from which the leaders for the Church at large from this



—Monkemeyer

Workers loading ore in an African mine. Young people support foreign and home missions when specific projects are described in terms of the social, economic, political and religious forces with which they seek to deal, Mr. Andrews observes. For example, young people wish to see African missions evaluated in terms of their relationship to the white man's exploitation of the native peoples.

age group will come. But the Young People's Group should at least be so closely tied-in with the total Church program that there is not the slightest basis for feeling it is outside the Church or merely an adjunct to it.

Young People in Social Action

I have suggested what I feel should be the relationship of young people to the Church as members of the Christian fellowship. I would like to report now on a sample survey I have made of what some churches are doing with young people in the area of social action, and to draw some implications as to programs that are needed in the future. I have made no exhaustive survey, as it was confined mostly to Congregational Christian churches, but it has given an illuminating sample.

The General Picture

The picture as a whole of what the Church is doing by way of social action—with emphasis on the *action*—is discouraging. It would be more discouraging were it not for the fact that there are in all sections of the country a few individual churches which seem to be grappling in earnest with the problem and doing some significant work.

The general picture is this: Most churches have discussions in their young people's groups from time to time on such topics as Race Relations, Inter-cultural Relations, Understanding the Negro, Understanding the Jew, The Problems of Labor, Alcoholism, Peace-time Military Training, and the United Nations. But there are relatively few churches which carry on beyond the discussion stage. Speakers are brought in or the young people themselves "bone up" to lead a discussion on some social problem. They meet and discuss it and then go home. One should of course not minimize the educational value of gaining new understanding, of seeing a different side of a problem, of stimulating thought. But the question must be raised as to whether it is good educational procedure to get young people steamed up about some problem and then pro-

vide no program whereby they can do something as individuals and as a group about their new concern. We can hardly claim to be engaged in social action if we stop with the *discussion* of social problems. The Church is known by the fruits of the lives of its members, by the things they do, by the people they are, by the activities in which they are engaged. We must be judged irresponsible if we are content to hold forums and discuss the political and economic and social problems of our day in the light of our faith without organizing ourselves to act, imperfect and inadequate though our action may be. Valuable as discussion is, by itself it has righted few injustices and brought about very few of the social changes and reforms which have been made in the life of man, and, as a technique by itself, it will have no more effect today. Christians as arm-chair strategists cut little ice. They will have to begin to put up or shut up.

Though the general pattern is one of much discussion and little action, there are groups of young people which have been engaged in some fairly significant projects.

Race Relations and the Understanding of Minority Groups

In some churches in the south as well as the north, there is visitation back and forth between Negro and white young people's groups for discussion, recreation and fellowship with the purpose of forming personal friendships across race lines. This is a very creative type of project if regular enough that young people in both race groups actually get to know each other and have a chance to share in significant programs. Several churches reported having interracial young people's groups of Negro-white or Indian-white or Mexican-white composition. In these churches the minority group has already been more or less assimilated into the Church, and one sees the fruit of earlier pioneering action.

Several young people's groups have visited synagogues, attending the services and talking with the Rabbi afterwards

about the meaning of the service and of the Jewish faith and customs. This is certainly a step beyond mere discussion in a home church about something with which a group has had no personal contact, though it would perhaps not be "social action" in any strict definition of the term.

On the action side, one group worked to get barber shops in its town to serve Negroes through getting white people to sign statements saying that they would continue to patronize shops which served an interracial clientele, instead of working for a boycott. One group presented the dramatization, "Meet Your Relatives," before service clubs and school groups in an effort to cultivate understanding and appreciation of other cultural and racial groups.

The Disciples for Christian Action of the Chicago Pilgrim



A Protestant Labor-Religion Seminar of white and Negro young people visits a meeting of a local chapter of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists. Mr. Andrews proposes that more youth groups develop programs which will acquaint them with the social and religious work of other faiths.

AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?



You've seen many houses like this in Chicago

BECAUSE There are 12 square miles of "blighted areas" in the City of Chicago where conditions are UNFIT FOR LIVING.

This includes almost ONE THIRD of all the "blighted areas" in the city. 142,323 out of 877,000 city dwellers live in these areas with dilapidated structures, boardwalk roads, sanitation beyond repair, vermin in abundance.

ONE FOURTH of the people in Chicago are crowded by these conditions. For these dwellings are HOMES for 440,000 of our city's population.

FURTHERMORE Figures show the outstanding fact that the cost of these homes to THE CITY is extra fire, disease, crime and police protection, uncollected taxes, etc. is MORE than the cost of TOTAL REBUILDING.

Can we not, as Congregational Christian People, do something to help provide homes in which persons may live and grow as the children of God?

The Disciples for Christian Action
of the
Chicago Pilgrim Fellowship

We hope to see you at Sunday and the Saturday Meeting

When mean ye that ye crush my people, and smite the face of the poor: saith the Lord Jehovah of hosts.

WHAT'S BEING DONE?



It All Depends Upon Your Support

Chicago is a city of 877,000 people. It is a city of 12 square miles of "blighted areas" where conditions are UNFIT FOR LIVING. This includes almost ONE THIRD of all the "blighted areas" in the city. 142,323 out of 877,000 city dwellers live in these areas with dilapidated structures, boardwalk roads, sanitation beyond repair, vermin in abundance.

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Two of the handbills advocating a low-cost housing program for Chicago distributed by the Disciples for Christian Action of the Chicago Pilgrim Fellowship. Note that the young people used both utilitarian and religious appeals. "The cost of the slums to the city in extra fires, disease, crime and police protection, uncollected taxes, etc. is more than the cost of total rebuilding. . . . 'What mean ye that ye crush my people, and grind the face of the poor, saith the Lord Jehovah of hosts.'"

Fellowship campaigned against restrictive covenants barring Negroes from certain areas of the city. On three different Sundays they distributed hand-bills in the city's Congregational churches, calling for positive action for housing reform in Chicago. One hand-bill pointed out that there are 23 square miles of "blighted areas" in Chicago unfit for living, and that one-fourth of the city's population lives in these areas. Another sheet showed a photograph of a tumble-down house with two Negro children on the porch and had the heading, "Don't Fence Me In." The flyer went on to point out that 80 per cent of the city is closed to Negroes by restrictive covenants and asked: "Can we not, as Congregational Christian people, begin to do something—patiently, decisively—to solve this problem? Can we not unite to press for a program of new low-cost hous-

ing in ALL parts of the city, open to ALL people who need it?" The Disciples for Christian Action since 1945, when this particular project was carried on, have become less active for reasons of leadership and turnover of membership and organization, but it would seem to be one of the most interesting and challenging experiments that any church group has tried in realistic social action. It indicates the sort of thing that any church might do in trying to meet problems in its own community.

The young people of the Congregational Church in River Edge, New Jersey, make a sizeable contribution each year toward the Mary McLeod Bethune Scholarship Fund and have a member on its Board of Trustees. This is a fund which helps Negro graduates of Hackensack High School to continue their education in college.

Community Service

Several young people's groups report work in settlement houses and playgrounds in their home cities as volunteer leaders. In one city such leadership was provided Friday eve-

DISCIPLES FOR CHRISTIAN ACTION

The Disciples for Christian Action is a group of young people which developed within the Pilgrim Fellowship in the Chicago area and which is especially interested in social action. Its "Statement of Purpose" affirms:

"THE DISCIPLES FOR CHRISTIAN ACTION is a group of Congregational young people of the Chicago area who consider Christianity their most important loyalty. We believe this means we should be concerned about social problems of today. We commit ourselves to become better informed and to put our ideas into action, and with it we commit ourselves to deepen our own religious living.

"IN PARTICULAR: We are an interracial fellowship believing that one of our first tasks is to create better understanding among all races. We will take action to right all inequalities and injustices to minority groups.

"We are concerned about better working conditions and the creating of a just economic order.

"We will endeavor to take action in regard to other social problems which affect our Christianity and the building of a democratic world. Among these we are concerned about both international questions and local questions such as our own school conditions.

"Finally, we commit ourselves, both as a group and as individuals, to grow in our personal religious life as well as in our social responsibility."

nings and all day Saturday and Saturday evenings. One group helped construct a playground in an area where there were inadequate play facilities. Young people's groups have had a hand in establishing community recreation centers for the 'teen age group in the effort to fight juvenile delinquency. One minister writes: "Various attempts have been made by civic groups and by the city government to provide recreational programs, but for one reason or another they were not entirely successful. The situation got to the point where the young people were disturbed by the confusion and developed resentment toward adult bungling. Their Fellowship was of the opinion that the problem was primarily one of human relationships and a good place to relate Christianity to community thinking, so they had a debate centered around the problem and invited six adult judges, some of them being on the town council and members of the church. The judges were forced to admit the logic and reasoning of the debaters and it made for better and clearer understanding on the part of the young people and helped to re-establish confidence and understanding." It is not clear just what practical results were forthcoming—but this is certainly a technique of social action which would be applicable in a good many communities in seeking to achieve action in some area.

Other groups have taken tours visiting the social agencies in their city or region, getting acquainted with the ways in which the community is organized to meet human needs.

Political Action

In Missouri, young people's groups prepared and distributed the voting records of state and national representatives, and the method of house-to-house distribution of political education material has been tried by other young people's groups.

One group of young people studied the issues involved in Conscription and the F.E.P.C. and then corresponded with their Congressmen.

Though young people are too young to vote, they are not too young to study and think about the issues involved in political campaigns, hear speakers representing different points of view, read material put out by conflicting pressure groups and achieve an understanding in terms of their Christian faith of the issues at stake. They are not too young to ask questions or to distribute material which will stimulate adult thinking and develop concern among those of voting age. They are not too young to campaign to get out the vote in their communities. They are not too young to become aware of injustices at home and abroad and to seek to spread this awareness and concern and to keep working until something is done. When we say that there is nothing young people can do about political action we are but nurturing in them the same attitude which possesses their elders. We are saying that because there are not things to do which achieve immediate and dramatic results, they had as well not do anything. Social action, like Christian living, does not often produce dramatic results overnight. Its achievements have to be seen and looked for over a longer span of time. It is as indefensible to refrain from social action because one cannot see immediate results as it is to refrain from trying to be a Christian merely because one does not immediately blossom forth in saintly character.

Overseas Relief

In the last few years a great many young people's groups have had a share in raising money for the relief of war victims and in sending food and clothing overseas. One or two groups reported going to a warehouse in New York to help pack boxes. One group reported a "famine dinner" sponsored by the group to raise money. One group sponsored a war orphan for a month. Other groups have collected food and clothing in their home communities.

I know that the young people with whom I work have grown tremendously through their participation in this sort of ac-

tivity. Over the past half-dozen years we have raised money for the World Student Service Fund—each year setting and reaching a higher goal than the year before. In the last two years a special contact with a French school, Le Collège Cévenol, to which we have sent food and clothing and a very small amount of money, has meant a great deal in widened international contacts. Letters are beginning to go back and forth now, and the one world of which we talk is becoming more of a reality to the young people. Whatever help we are able to give is more than matched by the satisfactions of actually doing something practical toward international understanding and good will.

There will be the need for physical relief overseas for several more years at least, but it is not too soon to begin thinking of ways in which the interest we have evoked for this type of project may be drawn into international projects of a more permanent nature, involving the exchange of letters and young people and the participation of young and old in our churches here and in other countries in joint international projects. We are beginning to see that the missionary movement is not a one-way street leading from America out to Africa or India or China, but rather a two-way project in which we have fully as much to receive from the younger churches as we have to give them. There should be no insurmountable difficulty in bringing American local churches in contact with local churches in other countries, to the mutual benefit and growth of all concerned. International conferences of church leaders may proclaim the oneness of Christians everywhere and discuss the ecumenical task of the world Church, but in the end their pronouncements will be empty phrases unless individual Christians have the actual experience of contact with Christians in other lands through letters, through packages, through hearing of their work and their problems, or through knowing them and their leaders personally. •

In our efforts at Northfield in overseas relief we have tried

sending food or clothing both through relief organizations and by eleven-pound packages through the mail. It is theoretically uneconomical to send the smaller packages—but they arrived quickly on the scene and met needs, and their arrival carried a personal message of interest and concern from us to those who received them. The building of international friendship and understanding must be a personal thing and it should be the concern of large organizations to foster and develop personal contacts between Christians here and abroad. In our relief efforts we have given money to large organizations for distribution and doubtless that money has been used wisely in meeting human need on an emergency basis, but we must also place great emphasis on building personal ties from nation to nation.

Week-end Service Projects

Some college church groups have experimented with week-end work camps in which groups of young people have gone out to rural churches and joined with young people there in some work project for the benefit of the church or community—such as cutting firewood, painting a meeting room, or repairing a church or community center. This work has been combined with joint recreation on Saturday evening and with sharing in the service on Sunday and the young people's meeting and church school. One of the results has been a clearer understanding of community problems and of problems facing the church in the community. Social action takes place when the group actually does something for a community which will make it a better place. Even a week-end of social action stimulates a community to think and plan and work for its own improvement. Further, this sort of project brings rural and urban youth together. It can easily be reversed, with rural young people visiting a city church for the week-end.

Summer Service Opportunities

Work camps, students-in-industry projects, summer cara-



—Emily Frey

Last summer a Quaker work camp at Lilbourn, Mo., built a community center (right) for one of the Delmo Homes Projects, now part of the vast parish of Rev. David S. Burgess.

vans, counselling in camps for under-privileged children, and serving in day nurseries are a few of the opportunities open to young people for significant forms of social action during the free summer months. Most of these are well known and there is no need for repetition here. There is a directory of such summer opportunities, which may be obtained from the United Christian Youth Movement.* Most of these work opportunities have the advantage of giving education in social problems at the same time one is actively at work.

Other Possibilities

A denominational organization for young people in one state urges its affiliated groups to engage in at least one specific

*United Christian Youth Movement, 203 North Wabash, Chicago 1, Ill.

action program in each of the four areas of Personal Action, Social Action, Interdenominational Action and Mission Action. Under Social Action the following points are included:

1. Study your neighborhood for evidences of social problems, i.e., cultural or economic tensions.
2. Invite a representative of the National Conference of Christians and Jews to speak to your group about inter-cultural relations in your city.
3. Study your neighborhood for playground facilities.
4. Invite your city alderman to tell your group his plans for improving your neighborhood.
5. Study the structure and function of the United Nations.
6. Invite your Senator or Congressman to tell your group about his views on foreign policy.
7. Study discrimination and segregation practices in churches, schools, theatres, etc.

Evaluation of Existing Programs

Several criticisms of existing programs of social action in young people's groups appear to be justified. First of all, we are failing to make the connection between education about social problems and action to solve those problems. In our churches we may generate a great deal of concern for social justice, we may develop righteous indignation over the discrimination which minority groups face, we may elicit tremendous concern for the future of man in an atomic age—but we rarely go beyond the discussion stage. Psychologically, we are doing young people irreparable damage by failing to relate discussion to action, for we are developing the attitude so prevalent in the adult community—of believing that, if we have discussed something, we have done something about it. People who have been aroused over social evils many times and have been given no opportunities to do anything about them soon lose the ability to respond. They become calloused and indifferent. It would be better to put off discussing social where. Ask those who are concerned to meet immediately

issues until plans are made for a program of action to follow up such discussion.

In the second place, I have come across little evidence of an integrated church program of social action. Young people are generally discussing social problems off by themselves; where they are acting, they are often playing a lone hand there, too. There would be real values in having a social action group including young people along with adults, to study social problems, survey the community for social evils, and work for a greater awareness in all church members of the social demands of their faith and the action which they might take as Christian citizens. At first there might be only a half-dozen church members interested in a project of this kind, but it is the sort of thing which would grow and which would certainly win the support and participation of a wide group of young people if it were well planned and organized.

Many social action groups among young people are trying to tackle too many problems simultaneously. Concentration on one or two problems at a time, and following them through the stages of gathering information, education, and action, certainly is a better plan than trying to cover all of the social problems of the world in one year. The satisfactions which will come through working on one problem, understanding it thoroughly, and then doing something about it will give the enthusiasm to carry on with other problems in like manner.

How to Get a Group of Young People Interested in Social Action

One method which is probably the simplest is to present some social issue or problem at a young people's meeting, or better yet, at a forum for the whole church. Plan the presentation so that it will get people upset and disturbed. In the question or discussion period bring out the fact that there are certain things which have been done about the problem elsewhere. Ask those who are concerned to meet immediately

after the meeting. Arrange for a meeting of this group which will be a nucleus for a social action group in the church. This



—Chicago Sun

Leaders of the "Youth for Christ" movement before boarding a plane in Chicago for an "evangelization of Europe tour," stage a "down on your knees" prayer for news camera men. The program of the movement is antithetical to the type of religion advocated by Mr. Andrews in this issue of *Social Action*, observes H. M. Myers, who recently completed a careful study of the "Youth for Christ" movement. Mr. Myers summarized the movement as follows in a recent article in *Motive* magazine (January, 1947):

"It is a fundamentalist movement with strong fundamentalist backing and a very fundamentalist gospel message. Its theology is superficial and often of the 'fear' type. It lacks both a training program and a social outlook beyond narrow patriotism. Usually it not only fails to cooperate with the local churches, but it is arrayed against them—with the exception of the fundamentalist ones. Its audience is largely adult. Yet the movement attracts thousands to its rallies, receives much financial backing from business leaders of conservative religious and social sympathies and interests, has been the recipient of valuable advertising by the Hearst papers, and is spreading outside of the United States. Ministers, on the whole, seem opposed to it, yet few effective counter-measures are being taken. At the present time it seems to be a gigantic recruiting agency for the fundamentalist evangelical denominations. What its future will be depends on its own leadership and the reaction of established denominations to that leadership."

group can study the problem further, recommend specific action and go to work to put it across.

Most young people who have grown up with even a nodding acquaintance with the Church respond eagerly and sympathetically to social need, to injustice, and to suffering when made aware of it. The Church faces the problem of deepening the roots of this sympathy in the Christian faith and of channeling it into action which will bring relief and change in society. If it would perform this task it must bring its young people into the Church fellowship as full, responsible, participating members, and it must guide and encourage them, stand behind them and go with them as they seek to make of this world a better place. It is not enough to challenge our young people, to congratulate them on "the great opportunities for service which are theirs in building the better world of tomorrow." It is not enough to shock them with the appalling needs of our day. Members of local churches must join with them in the service of that kingdom of God which it is our faith will yet be established among men. This is not just a young people's project. It is the stuff and substance of our Christian vocation.

The Reader Writes

Methodists and Relief

Sirs:

In the November issue of Social Action I note on page 36 a Selected Directory of Private Agencies doing relief work abroad. I notice in this list the Congregational Christian Service Committee and also the Lutheran World Relief. The inclusion of these two denominational agencies leads me to inquire as to why there was not included the Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief, of which Bishop Herbert

Welch is the Chairman.

I am asking not because of any disappointment that the Methodist Committee is not listed but in order to inquire whether or not Social Action regards the Methodist Committee as in a different category with Lutheran World Relief or the Congregational Committee. If so, then I would like to know what the difference is.

R. E. Diffendorfer
Executive Secretary
Board of Missions and
Church Extension

Methodist Church
New York, New York

(Perhaps the editors should have called the list of private agencies a "Sample" rather than a "Selected Directory." As the preface of the issue states, "The Congregational Committee for War Victims and Reconstruction . . . corresponds to similar organizations established for the same purpose in every major denomination." Social Action regards the Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief as "established" for the same purpose" and in the same category as the Congregational Committee and all other denominational relief agencies.—Editors.)

Seeds of Destiny

Sirs:

In your very fine recent issue of *Social Action* entitled "UNRRA AND AFTER," I see that Mr. Pickett, in his article on the need to share, refers to the motion picture, SEEDS OF DESTINY.

This film was made by the War Department at our request and all distribution to the general public outside of the Army is our responsibility.

Since the reference to this film in *Social Action* will, undoubtedly, bring you queries as to how it can be obtained, I am enclosing the following information:

Prints of SEEDS OF DESTINY may be rented from any of the following:

Films of the Nations, Inc., 18
West 55th Street, New York 19,
N. Y.

* * *

Ideal Pictures Corporation, 26
East 8th Street, Chicago 3, Illinois.
Ideal Pictures Corporation, 2408
West 7th Street, Los Angeles 5,
California.

Loan Service Charge: \$2.00 single day, plus transportation both ways.

Speaking personally, may I say that I have never seen as fair and accurate a description and appraisal of UNRRA's work as that contained in Mr. Grulio's article entitled "UNRRA and After"?

William H. Wells

Chief, Visual Media Branch
Office of Public Information
United Nations Relief and
Rehabilitation Administration
Washington 25, D.C.

* * *

Print Both Sides

Sirs:

I have been reading your sheets for several years and am sorry to say that by far the greatest portion of your articles have been written by men with a leftist frame of mind and at times I feel that you

Contributions to this department, a regular feature of the magazine, will be welcomed. Unless it is specified otherwise, any communications addressed to the Editors will be considered available for publication. Letters should be brief, and the Editors reserve the right to omit portions without changing the sense. Unsigned letters will not be published, except where anonymity is obviously warranted. Address communications to the Editors, 409 Prospect Street, New Haven 11, Connecticut.

are one of the so-called propagandist sheets which flood our country.

I feel that when you print an article of a controversial type you should give both sides an even break to be heard and thereby show that you wish to be fair and give your readers opportunity to form their own opinions. This you have not done in the past but I am in hopes that you may come around and give every one a time at bat.

E. H. Oldach

Rocky River, Ohio

* * *

(Not long ago we conducted a scientifically arranged sample of our readers to find out if they wanted each issue of the magazine divided into a "liberal" and "conservative" section, and our readers overwhelmingly opposed such a policy.

The Council for Social Action and the editors personally have opposed any rigid division of each issue, for several reasons. On many subjects it is difficult to make such a division. The lines are not clearly drawn. On many subjects, such as "Roads to Full Employment," sides have definitely formed and you will note that in that issue we ran an article by a labor leader and one by a prominent business leader. On some issues, we feel that so little literature is available presenting the position of certain movements, such as the Farm Labor Union, and so much available on the position of other groups, such as the Farm Bureau and the Grange, that we are obligated as a free and a Christian press to give the underdog a chance to be heard.

On issues such as "Social Evangelism," always a controversial subject, we decided to take the stand we did only after much discussion and study among the members of the Council for Social Action and after interviews with many writers and leaders in the field. We tried to

pioneer here, laying the basis for a new emphasis on a neglected area of foreign and home missions.

On some issues we seek a scholar so competent and objective that we can leave to him and his conscience the analysis of crucial issues—for instance, our 1944 campaign issue by Wilfred Binkley, Knopf prize historian. This issue was praised by Dr. Ronald Bridges, then Moderator of the Congregational Christian Churches as "an effort rare in political seasons to look on a campaign with honesty and good will." So, too, our issue on UNRRA is being acclaimed by officials in the State Department and by business and labor leaders as a just appraisal of a very controversial area.

A propagandist sheet distorts, hides, lies about facts and often publishes under auspices other than those it publicly claims. No one can publish a magazine without having certain underlying presuppositions and convictions which influence his selection of copy. But honest editing, we believe, comes in being scrupulous about presenting facts and in making explicit a magazine's presuppositions and auspices. This Social Action seeks to do. You can help us by your letters, and we are grateful for your interest.—K.U., for the Editors)

Last Things

Sirs:

In the issue of *Social Action* for October 15, 1946 Paul Ramsay took the view that the precepts of Jesus on non-resistance have no relevance in present day Christian ethics because Jesus relegated coercive action to God who was expected very shortly to intervene and institute a new order of society. That expectation was mistaken. Christians today must, therefore, substitute on occasion "humanly directed violence for Divine violence." I quite agree with Mr.

Ramsay that the Christian ethic consists not of rules but of principles which must be applied differently in varying situations, but I would enter a caution against so simple and confident a treatment of the effects on ethics of early Christian eschatology.

The expectation of the imminent divine intervention is capable of more than one effect on ethics. Jewish messianism was revolutionary. Christian messianism was quietistic. The explanation of this difference must lie in something other than the time factor. Modern interpreters ascribe diametrically opposite effects to the eschatology of Jesus. Some say that his ethic was *ad interim*. The point was: give away your cloak because there will never be another winter. Others say that his ethic was *post interim*, that is that the Sermon on the Mount would not and could not go into effect until after God had introduced an entirely new social context. And since that has never happened the Sermon on the Mount remains in perpetual abeyance.

Since such divergent interpretations are possible we cannot assume without examination that eschatology could have but one outcome. We must study the record to see what effect it actually did have. We discover in the Sermon on the Mount that the motive is not the shortness of the time but the imitation of the mercy and perfection of God. Paul alone makes a direct application of eschatology to ethics when in view of the shortness of the time he recommends no change of status. The effect is social conservatism. He was speaking primarily of marriage, but the same line of thought if applied to the state would make for its conservation. When we pass to the early Church we find that the hope of the coming speedily wanes. In the third century it was deferred by two hundred or three hundred

years, yet at the same time aloofness from the state and its coercive power became more intense. How little eschatology had to do with it may be seen from the fact that Tertullian the literal eschatologist and Origen who allegorized eschatology were equally pacifist and aloof from political life.

Roland H. Bainton
Professor of Ecclesiastical History
Yale University Divinity School
New Haven, Conn.

Morality and Planning

Sirs:

I agree with Dr. Eduard C. Lindeman in the June, 1946 *Social Action* ("In What Direction is America Moving?") that new terms other than "left-liberal and right-reactionary" are necessary. But more than that I resent *labeling* people so finally and definitely. Many people accept the inevitability of change, and are vitally interested in the welfare of the masses, but do not accept the belief that these ends can be satisfactorily obtained by economic or too much social planning.

First, the complexity of our business life calls for the working out of so many details that they cannot possibly be followed through sufficiently to provide enforcement. The loopholes breed a certain variety of human parasite which brings into being a filth and corruption that infects large segments of the population. . . . The experience of seeing apparently solid citizens succumb to the ready money offered them unscrupulously is a sickening one. Under N.R.A. (set up to sustain hard pressed business) it was the buyer who held up the automobile dealer for an "on the side" bonus on his trade-in. Under O.P.A. many dealers demanded from purchasers of new and used cars "on the side" bonuses, and where the dealer was scrupulously honest, he was constantly beleaguered and tempted by individuals

as well as black marketeers to accept their bribes for delivery preference. . . . And most disheartening of all was the young G.I. who used his priority to buy new cars legitimately and immediately sold them in the black market at enormous profits.

This represents just my own experience in one line of business, but discussion with other business men indicates that these practices were rampant in any business controlled by O.P.A., and in view of the N.R.A. experience, these conditions cannot be blamed on the easily earned money of the present inflationary period.

In the matter of protecting the citizens of a nation from the major hazards of life through insurances and subsidies, my mind is more or less a question mark. How much of a man's personal responsibility for himself can be assumed by government without weakening the man? Of three men in our office having unemployment insurance coverage, hospitalization, and health and accident insurance, two of the three used none of these insurances; one used all three to the limits of their coverage and finally died the self-inflicted death of a hypochondriac. . . . How many of our people are potential hypochondriacs will never be fully known until or unless a national medical program is in effect.

Unemployment insurance, rarely used by the average citizen, decreases the value to society of the weakling who might otherwise be made a little stronger, a little more dependable by the necessity for earning a living. Yet who can question the stabilizing effect of such insurance during a general recession of business?

Neither of the alternatives offered by Dr. Lindeman will produce stability with liberty. Only a more broadly educated people, with a deep sense of individual responsibility to each other and to the nation, a new

realization of the interlocking interests of labor and management and their joint responsibilities to the farmers, and a strong revival of typically American personal pride and dignity together with a fine integrity can revitalize and save the economy of our nation. Government's job here is to weld together the various factions of our society and break down the class distinctions that have been emphasized for political strategy during the past twelve or fourteen years.

By personal pride, I mean the kind that would prevent a man from taking a job at full pay where there is nothing for him to do as in the case of Petrillo's musicians, or for a young, healthy G.I. from joining the 52-20 club rather than accept a job at beginner's wages. By dignity, I mean the worker's pride in a job well done at wages high enough so that he can provide for his own emergencies, decide upon and buy for himself the kind of insurances he deems best, offered him in group form, but transferrable from one employee group to another in case he changes his job.

What should be the role of the Church in the light of the above analysis?

In political and economic affairs, the Church has a perspective such as we average citizens, with our feet stuck in the mire of the every day struggle for existence, cannot possibly achieve. But here the Church must tread more lightly—more tentatively—striking a balance between the sociologist with his head in the clouds and the layman, for we, with our muddy feet, have a greater sense of reality, and having to wallow in it, want to keep that mud clean and free from the parasites with which we have so recently had to fight for survival.

Ruth B. Rockefeller
White Plains, N. Y.

Social Scene

When enemy bombs were aimed for one of our airbases in the vicinity of Kunming, they overshot their target and wiped out a nearby village. Thereupon the pilots and crews of the base took up a collection of more than a thousand dollars, and trucked out with money and equipment to help put together again the village ruined by "eggs" they knew were meant for them.

This readiness to engage in humanitarian relief is the hope of the world. Its prevalence among returnees is notable, and bodes well for the future of committees for relief and reconstruction. There are thousands of youth in our universities eager to assist the restorative processes of our world, could they find just where to lend a hand. The chief resistances they meet are in the habituated conservatism and institutionalized red-tape of existing agencies. Free this ardor from inadventurous routines, and we could launch a reconstructive force such as no generation before us has known.

The Church-trained, Christ-touched youth of our time, were their energies disciplined and channelled, could heal a bit the wound of the world and nullify the inaction of government agencies and church boards, erase the depredations of "private enterprise" and black markets, and release the potential good will of the world.

The Friends Service Committee projects in Mexico, Puerto Rico and Europe have set a pattern of such effective social action as might appear from Berlin to Bombay, from Boston to Baltimore. The churches and governments that do not use this spiritual energy are missing the boat about to depart on a round the world cruise.

Alfred W. Swan